

**Amherst Council on Aging**  
**July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2002**

**Members Present:** Jean Haggerty, Liz Massey, Sara Wolff, Barbara Melrose, Elsie Fetterman, Isaac BenEzra,

**Staff Present:** John Clobridge, Nancy Pagano, Barbara Slovin

**Guest:** Doris Holden, Treasurer of the Senior Trust

**Call to Order, Introductions:** Barbara M. called the meeting to order and she will serve as chair until new officers are elected at the August meeting. Three of our five new COA members were present and there were introductions all around.

**Orientation for New Members:** Barbara M. asked John about how new members are being oriented. She feels **all** members should be involved with this process. John is meeting with new members one on one to answer questions and he has given each a notebook of pertinent materials. Sara feels it is especially important to include the COA charge and information about the Senior Trust such as its general description, accomplishments, goals and the responsibilities of the Trustees. Jean feels the best orientation is to "be here". She is volunteering on the hostess desk and attending events. This allows her to hear what people want, see what groups are meeting and how many people are taking advantage of the various activities. Barbara Melrose summarized by saying that members be given six months of minutes as well as the COA and Senior Trust materials mentioned by Sara. Isaac felt members should understand they are an advisory board sanctioned by the Town representing the senior community. They should understand their limited role and resources, the issues of transportation, home care, housing and the importance of their role to look at issues of community and diversity.

**Minutes of June 13<sup>th</sup> Meeting** accepted as read. Clarification was asked about the mention of Jim Becker. Barbara M. has recently spoken to him, and while he is willing to come sooner, she suggested he come when it is known that all members can be present.

**Public Comments:** Barbara M. suggests that people should know that there is an opportunity for public comments at COA meetings. It was suggested that an article about this could be put in the *Senior Spirit* and the *Amherst Bulletin*. Isaac suggested a note in the ACTV community calendar and a mention on "Age is the Rage".

**Senior Trust:** Doris handed out her report on Trust activity for June and July. Isaac is very concerned about the sharp drop in the stock market and he feels if it drops another 20 points or so we will need to talk to a financial advisor about what to do about the Trust monies. Barbara M. commented that the Trust is different than individual investments. She said the broker was spoken with a year ago and said there was no reason to move the money.

John thanked the Trust for paying for the bottled water for the Senior Center. The Senior Center's Center Activities budget will pay for it from now on. Barbara M. thinks the S.C. should look into a filter for the sink and come back to the Trust with a proposal. **VOTED to reimburse the Senior Center Club for the scholarships given out to date.**

**Director's Report:**

- **Amherst representation to Highland Valley.** HVES is a confederation of COAs and the number of representatives each Council has reflects their portion of the senior population. Amherst is entitled to two. Alan Root was our COA representative and his position needs to be filled. Elsie thinks the new Chair should go plus one other. She says RFPs (requests for proposals) are now being sought at HVES for caregivers support and adult family care programs. **MOVED to ask Elsie to be one of our reps and she accepted the position.** She expressed her concern that other members should have a chance to be reps if they want to. Barbara Melrose feels it's important to have two members attend.

- **Parking garage update.** The tour given last Friday 6/28 was a great success with 45 attending. John is working on accessibility and affordability. He will attend the Parking Commission meeting 7/23 about this. John is working on three things: 1) as much free parking as possible, 2) some parking in adjacent lots w/parking card, and 3) a discount for seniors. There will be an increase of handicapped spots in the area.
- **Work plan.** John suggests the COA have three standing committees instead of 4 or 5. Each would have a staff liaison and would report to the COA. Barbara Melrose pointed out that there would have to be ad hoc committees from time to time.

### **Nancy's Staff Report:**

**Two big events this fall are envisioned:** a newcomer/retiree orientation and a health fair in conjunction with the annual flu clinic. COA members are invited to help with planning for these activities.

**HVES Nutrition Site.** Thanks to Ferne Finger's hard work, the lunch program is now running in the black. Home deliveries for the four routes are mostly done by volunteers now, which is saving a lot of money. Numbers of congregate participants are down a bit over the summer. Nancy explained that HVES has had a budget reduction and they are cutting back on the evening meal option for the home delivered clients. There is a concern that some elders who have agreed to give up the bagged supper meal may really need it and not having it puts them at risk. HVES may have further cuts in the future depending on the state budget. Worst case might be a freeze on new clients. **It was decided that John should invite Deborah Hertz to the COA meeting in August to learn more about the situation.**

**Senior Center Club.** Nancy touched on the current low balance in the Senior Center Club account due to the lunch program deficit which used up the Center Activities money. The SCC covered all outstanding Senior Center expenses for the last few months of the fiscal year. Nancy will be seeking to raise money to build up this account again.

### **Other**

Isaac—If you live in state public housing and you work part time, housing costs may soon rise! If the Massachusetts House enacts Section #34 of the Omnibus Housing Bill—H-4284, elderly residents (62 or older) will have to include the income from their part-time jobs that is now disregarded. Section #34 would also undermine the requirement for cities and towns to have 10% low income housing. Isaac wants the board to call Tom Finneran saying the COA opposes this. VOTED for COA (John) to do this. There is a meeting of the Mass. Senior Action Council next Wednesday 7/17 at 1:30 PM at the Bangs to discuss this.

**Next meeting: August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2002 9 AM**

Minutes respectfully submitted by Nancy Hirsh Pagano